United Nations ECE/EX/2014/L.14

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
28 April 2014

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Committee

Sixty-eighth meeting
Geneva, 30 April 2014
Item 6(b) of the provisional agenda
Decisions on matters relating to the Committee on Sustainable Energy

Draft decision

Decision approving the Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane for 2014–2015

1. At its eighth session (Geneva, 19–20 November 2013), the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (subsequently renamed as the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane) recommended to the Executive Committee to approve its work plan for 2014–2015.

2. The Executive Committee, at its sixty-eighth meeting on 30 April 2014, approved the work plan of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane for 2014–2015 as contained in the Annex.

GE.14-22159
1422159

Please recycle

Annex

Work Plan of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane for 2014–2015

I. Introduction

1. Annex II (item V) of the Executive Committee decision on the Terms of Reference of the Committee on Sustainable Energy and Mandates and Terms of Reference of its subsidiary bodies (ECE/EX/7) mandates the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane to carry out concrete result-oriented activities with the objective to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from coal mines by means of activities that may help the recovery and use of methane in order to reduce the risks of explosions in coal mines. The principal area of work of the Group of Experts is best practice guidance for effective drainage, recovery and usage of coal mine methane. The mandate is approved until December 2015, with the possibility of extension.

2. Activities and outputs of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane need to be approved by the appropriate United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) body.

II. Concrete activities

3. At its meeting[1] held in November 2013, the Group of Experts agreed to concentrate on the following five activities in 2014–15 (see paragraph 21 of the Meeting Report ECE/ENERGY/GE.4/2013/2):

A. Electronic dissemination of Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines

Description: Using the remaining funds from the Cooperative Project on Methane Capture and Use: Best Practice Guidance on Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines ECE Trust Fund E141), this activity seeks to electronically disseminate the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines to a wide audience of potential beneficiaries:

- Coal mine operators (managers in charge of methane management and coal mine safety);
- Research institutes;
- Coal mine associations;
- Civil society;
- Independent experts; and
- Academia.

[1] The Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane, as it was called then, held its eighth meeting in Geneva, 19–20 November 2013.

The original intention of the project to disseminate best practices to audiences in China, Kazakhstan and Ukraine was achieved in 2011 and 2012. At the meeting held on 19–20 November 2013, the experts noted that it would be beneficial if the publication could be translated into more languages, such as Spanish, Mongolian, Vietnamese, and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian so that a wider audience could be reached. The experts also noted the need to update the original English version, which is four years old and could benefit from being brought up to date.

Work to be undertaken:

- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts identify professional translators to translate the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines into Spanish and Mongolian, as well as Vietnamese, Korean and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (depending on the availability of funds);
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts establish technically qualified national peer review bodies to compare the translations with the English original to verify their technical accuracy and linguistic quality;
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts agree the final drafts through an interactive electronic exchange among the Group of Experts; and
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts publish and disseminate translated versions electronically.

Deliverables: Best Practice Guidance on Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines in Spanish, Mongolian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.

Timeline:

- Spanish version: first draft June 2014, final draft September 2014, approved version November 2014, electronically published January 2015.
- Mongolian version: first draft September 2014, final draft December 2014, approved version January 2015, electronically published April 2015.
- Vietnamese version: first draft November 2014, final draft February 2015, approved version April 2015, electronically published June 2015.
- Korean version: first draft January 2015, final draft April 2015, approved version June 2015, electronically published September 2015.
- Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian version: first draft March 2015, final draft June 2015, approved version September 2015, electronically published November 2015.

B. Update and further development of Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines

Description: The Group of Experts decided to explore how to update and further develop the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines. The Group of Experts recognized that this activity will depend on the availability of resources (experts or funds).

Work to be undertaken:

- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts establish a task force to examine the content and structure of an updated Best Practice Guidance with a view to identifying themes that need to be addressed in a next edition;
- The bureau of the Group of Experts organizes communications among the Task Force to suggest possible changes and additions;
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts determine a new structure and content of the Best Practice Guidance to propose to the larger Group of Experts

Deliverables: Presentation to the Group of Experts with recommendations on a new content for the Best Practice Guidance.

Timeline: Establish a Task Force (April 2014), present newly proposed structure and content of the Best Practice Guidance to the Group of Experts (November 2014).

C. Prepare proposals for case studies, where appropriate and financed by extrabudgetary resources, on the application of best practice guidance in specific coal mines in different regions of the world

Description: Case studies are needed to demonstrate both how the principles outlined in the Best Practice Guidance can be implemented at operating coal mines around the world. The original Best Practice Guidance contained seven case studies organized in a common framework (Initial Conditions—Gas Control Problems—Solution) for comparison purposes. Project E187, funded by the Russian Federation, could provide an opportunity to expand the case study database by elaborating concrete, in-depth case studies and analyses that demonstrate the benefits of best practices applied in practice.

Work to be undertaken:

- Demonstrate the application of the best practice guidance by the Group of Experts at an operating coal mine, if accepted, using the funds from Project E187 depending on their availability.
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts review the current framework for cases studies and, if needed, propose a new structure;
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts reach out to various coal mining institutions and coal mine operators to encourage them to share relevant case studies on the application of best practices;
- The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts review of the case studies by the Group of Experts though an by electronic exchange electronic platform and discuss them, as applicable, at the annual sessions planned for 2014 and 2015;
- The secretariat publishes case studies on the ECE coal mine methane website after endorsement by the Committee on Sustainable Energy; and
- Depending when the funds are made available, implement applicable deliverables of the project E187.

Deliverables: A number of case studies on the implementation of best practices in methane management; relevant E187 project deliverables accomplished.

Timeline: Review of the framework (by April 2014), communication sent to coal mines (June 2014), review of case studies (November 2014), publishing (as case studies arrive and are reviewed and approved), project E187 implemented according to its project timeline.

D. Facilitate establishment of International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane

Description: The Group of Experts established a Task Force of group members to work towards establishment of International Centre(s) of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (CMM), by one or more United Nations Member States. ECE's International Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Centre of Excellence is an official inter-regional United Nations programme led by ECE on behalf of other four United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, in cooperation with relevant United Nations and other agencies. A specialist Centre of Excellence is an organization or part of an organization that cooperates with the ECE International PPP Centre of Excellence in promoting and disseminating best practices in a specific area, in this case in coal mine methane management. The proposed International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane (ICE-CMM) will be a specialist centre tasked to support capacity-building activities and dissemination of best practices in economically viable methane abatement and utilisation, socially acceptable underground coalmine practices, and environmentally responsible methane management.

Once established, ICE-CMM will be a legal entity operating in the host country within the legal framework of that country. To this end, ECE and the host country will need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

Work to be undertaken:

- Solicit United Nations Member States to host ICE-CMM;
- Determine which country(ies) are interested:
- Select suitable candidates to host ICE-CMM; and
- Enter into procedure on structuring the Memorandum of Understanding needed to establish ICE-CMM.

Deliverables: Memorandum of Understanding on ICE-CMM.

Timeline: Deciding on the host country (November 2014), Memorandum of Understanding (November 2015).

E. Continue to provide advice to UNFCCC (on the matters related to ACM0008) and to other international, national and regional market-based coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms and coal mine methane related standards

Description: The secretariat and the Bureau of the Group of Experts will:

- Invite members of the Group of Experts to correspond with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and determine possible synergies between ISO Technical Committee (TC) 263 Coalbed Methane and the Group of Experts;

- Continue to provide advice to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the matters related to ACM0008 (Consolidated methodology for coal bed methane, coal mine methane and ventilation air methane capture and use for power (electrical or motive) and heat and/or destruction through flaring or flameless oxidation), in response to UNFCCC's earlier requests;
- Collect data on coal mine methane emissions in the UNECE region; and
- Provide comments on other international, national and regional market-based coal mine methane emission reduction mechanisms, such as the California Air Resources Board Mine Methane Capture Protocol.

Work to be undertaken:

- Continue to liaise with the above-mentioned and similar organizations.
- Explore the opportunity to meet with UNFCCC and ISO.

Deliverables: Report on coal mine methane management, inventories and standards.

Timeline: Through November 2015.